

(Messrs. B. and P.) of Manchester. The competition now began to wear a settled aspect, and a few of the architects sent for their plans back, but the answer in all cases was that it was not determined. The designers of the plans bearing "Ignatius" were now called in to make an approximate estimate, and to give a guarantee to the effect that it should be completed for the sum of 3,000*l*. The plans too were shewn to many friends, amongst whom happened to be one or two having a practical knowledge of building, who stoutly declared that it was ridiculous to imagine that such a design could be erected for 3,000*l*. However, the architects made an estimate, and shewed that it could be finished for about 3,250*l*, this was pretty near the mark, and certainly not to be objected to. Upon this the committee sent the design to the London commissioners (to whom they were applying for a grant); when, to the committee's astonishment, in a few days word came down that the walls for the aisles in the nave were but 14 inches thick, or thereabouts, and that those in the clerestory were somewhat less than that; but the committee, still determined not to lose a chance of having the pretty picture converted into a real church of stone, returned word that they themselves would bear the extra expense of the thickening of the walls, thus increasing the outlay to something about 3,500*l*.

The committee now thought all was pretty safe, when down came another objection in the form of a letter, stating that the tower with the supports it then had would actually fall before it was half way up; in short, objection upon objection was poured in, whilst the committee as obstinately tried to get rid of them; but, alas! all was in vain, for the commissioners at last resolved that if the committee attempted the design, they would not aid them. The hopes of "Ignatius" were now at an end, and it was left for the committee to choose another from the many designs they had received, and which (though two months had now elapsed) they still kept possession of; but it seemed they still had the pretty picture in their eye, for none of the forty or more designs would suit them: however, it appeared one or two of the committee had a friend (Mr. L. of Manchester), perhaps a particular friend, among the competitors, but who had, alas! made his plans too plain, though doubtless they were honest, for his could be erected for 3,000*l*; but then the church was not handsome enough, so what was to be done? Why this very honourable committee agreed, and actually sent for this friend, and gave him instructions to draw out a fresh set of drawings; this he did, and produced what we are told will be a very handsome church: but then may it not well be so, when he comes forward and says this design cannot be completed under 3,500*l*. Of course the committee are very sorry for that, but then he is a friend, and what is more, he has produced a more handsome design than any sent in (because he had 500*l*. more to work upon), so he must be the architect, and the church must proceed. Now let us take a glance at the private doings of this committee, and see how the competition has been carried on, and then we will leave these honourable men to their fate, and let us hope to public indignation too.

When first the building of this church was in its infancy, which was some two or three months before it was advertised, a certain minister (the Rev. H. Stowell) introduced to the intended minister of the new church, and one of the committee (the Rev. E. Harper), an architect (Mr. Shellard, of King-street), one whom no doubt he had every wish to see as the architect for the new building; however, I believe the minister there and then informed him that ultimately it would be a competition; but at the same time said, that if he would send them in a set of plans, the committee would look at them, and no doubt he should have interest enough to serve him. In a short time from that, a set of drawings was duly received, and pretty well looked over, but as the day of competition drew near, another set was also received from the same person, and took its place among the rest (this set was got up entirely under the immediate superintendence of the minister). Now these proceedings had been whispered abroad, and reports reached the ears of the committee back again, that it was but a sham competition,

ANCIENT IRONWORK.

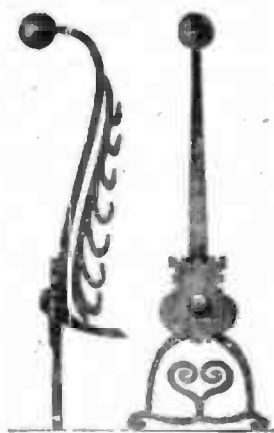


Fig. 1.

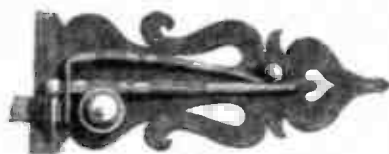


Fig. 3.

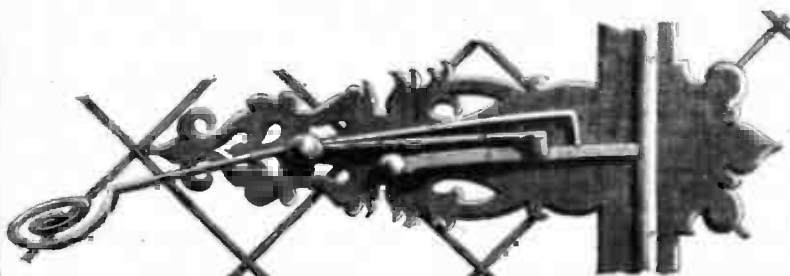


Fig. 2.

and that in fact, Mr. S. was the architect and already appointed; by which doings, many were deterred from sending in altogether. The committee again and again assured doubtful parties that all should have a fair chance, and amongst the committee were a few who did not like the idea of this same gentleman (Mr. S.) being thrust upon them whether or no, so the result was, that at the first meeting, it was moved, seconded, and carried (three only voting against it), that the plans of Mr. S. be taken away altogether; and thus was his chance lost entirely through being misled by one of themselves, his second plans not even looked at, but at once rejected. Again, in their conditions, all plans were to be in by the 11th of October, yet even far more than a fortnight after, plans were still being received; and yet further, to the regret of several of the committee, there were no plans in from the office of two architects (Starkey and Cusley, Cross-street, partners), who had built a very pretty church in the town (they had been deterred by the alarm that it was a false competition), so what did this honourable committee do even a fortnight or more after the day mentioned in the stipulations, but call at the said office, and solicit a set of drawings; whether they got them, or not, I am not sure, but I believe they did. And still after all not one of the designs sent in has been chosen; the committee have wasted the money of the subscribers too, for they have paid "Ignatius" between 10*l*. and 20*l*. for after trouble, and besides this report speaks of a bill of 30*l*. by way of a charge, which has been presented to them by their first friend, Mr. L.

Such is a pure and ungarlish history of the competition of St. Simon's Church, a competition in every way disgraceful to the committee; a committee appointed to inquire into the merits and demerits of some forty designs or more, each of which will have cost to the designers from 20*l*. to 50*l*. each, and lest it may be said that the grapes are sour, I beg to subscribe myself not an architect, but simply

Yours obediently,

A LOOKER-ON.

The church is now proceeding under the superintendence of the friend named, Mr.

Lane, of Manchester, and the committee are now afraid it will come to 4000*l*. for the architect's estimate for foundations was 130*l*. and they are costing 230*l*.

ANCIENT IRONWORK.

Fig. 1 gives the front and side view of an ancient fire-dog at an old hospital at Sandwich, in Kent. The date is about the time of James I. It is a very good example; the hook to support the spit for cooking is seldom seen attached.

Figs. 2 and 3 represent casement-fastenings. In old buildings the iron casement-fastenings were often very much enriched; they were sometimes so large as to reach quite across the frame, and sometimes they formed part of the frame itself. The larger of these examples here given is of the latter description. The old lead-light casements opening in the centre, were very difficult to close effectually, so as to keep out the wet; that the inconvenience must have been felt as fully in former times as it would be at present, our larger example is proof. It is a very ingenious contrivance for securely closing the two halves of the sash-frame. The rod *c*, attached to the end of one-half the frame, and turned by the handle *b*, has a buckle on the top and bottom, which falls on the other half of the iron frame of the sash. The spring-latch, as by a leverage action, closely presses in the handle *b*, and keeps the sash effectually tight, preventing any shaking from the wind, &c.

It may be here observed that the iron sash-frames in the state apartments at Holland House, Kensington (a most interesting structure) fastened on the same principle, are models of what may be done with these very inconvenient parts of old structures.

The two examples given are probably of about the period of Charles I. Such examples are seldom met with, though in some parts of the country they are numerous; at Saffron Walden, in Essex, for example, nearly every cottage has specimens, as ornamental as our largest examples, but they are merely spring-latches. R.